I&B Network in the NER, amount sanctioned and implementation status of the same;

(b) the details of the special package formulated for improvement of AIR and Doordarshan services in the region;

(c) the steps taken to man I&B installations in NER for effective operation;

(d) commissioning status of North East Special Channel recently inaugurated in the region; and

(e) the status of Height Extension of DD Tower, Dibrugarh?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) and (b) 10% budget is being earmarked and spent on development of network in the North East Region (NER). In addition, Rs. 4.26 crore has also been released from the non-lapsable pool for programme production for 24 hour NE Satellite channel. The action plan to improve AIR and Doordarshan services in the region and extend coverage to remote areas includes setting up of AIR and DD transmitters and Earth stations etc. at different locations. This will also result in increased broadcasting/telecasting of programmes, of relevance to the region in local languages/ dialects.

(c) Staff has been provided at various AIR/Doordarshan installations in NER, by way of redeployment, and all Radio Stations and TV transmitters in the region are giving full transmission.

(d) North East Channel (24 hrs.) had been commissioned on 27.12.2000.

(e) The scheme for extension of height of TV tower at Dibrugarh has been sanctioned.

Grant to Rajasthan

†2429. DR. MAHESH CHANDRA SHARMA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

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†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

(a) the items, programmes/schemes for which fund was made available to the Government of Rajasthan as a grant during the financial years 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 by her Ministry, along with the details of funds made available for each item/scheme; and

(b) whether Government of Rajasthan has submitted the account of the expenditure to Government?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) No funds/grants were made available to Government of Rajasthan for schemes by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting during the financial years 1999-2000 and 2000-2001.

(b) Does not arise.

HAM Radio sets in the country

2430. SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA NAHATA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) the number of HAM Radios in the country at present;

(b) whether Government will allow more HAM sets in the country so that they can be used in the event of emergent situations like cyclone, earthquake etc. and

(c) the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) The Department of Telecommunication has informed that there are approximately 15,908 license HAM Radio Operators in the country.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) During the times of natural calamities, the HAM operators are permitted to handle third party messages on behalf of state administrations and no specific permission from Department of Telecommunications is required for such purposes.